

7.0 FIRE PREVENTION PROGRAMS – PUBLIC EDUCATION

FIREWISE – A Community-wide Outreach Program

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) sponsors the FIREWISE Program. Members of the NWCG are responsible for wildland fire management in the United States and are represented by the USDA-Forest Service, the Department of Interior, the National Association of State Foresters, the U.S. Fire Administration and the National Fire Protection Association. FIREWISE promotes fire wise practices by 1) educating the public of the dangers of a wildfire in the area, 2) encouraging residents to take responsibility in reducing the risk of a wildfire and to create defensible space around their residence, and 3) increasing awareness of the natural role of low-intensity fires and the benefits of prescribed burning or occasionally managing natural wildland fires to achieve ecological benefits while maintaining firefighter and public safety as top priority. The estimated cost is \$10,000.00 per program.

A Checklist for Homeowners

Many Idaho residents desire to live in rural areas adjacent to or surrounded by hazardous fuels. The fuels have the potential to ignite a wildland fire and possibly a structural fire. In some cases homeowners have little to no understanding of the risks to themselves or to the emergency personnel who must respond to these fires. It is the homeowner's responsibility to protect their property.

The following checklist was developed to aid Fremont County homeowners residing within subdivisions and additions. The checklist contains standard questions used by FEMA (2004) and the FIREWISE Program. These questions have been modified, based on earlier assessments of subdivisions and additions and interviews with homeowners and fire chiefs.

Table 35: A Checklist for Homeowners.

Fremont County Homeowners
Do you know your wildfire risk?
Learn about the history of wildfire in your area, local fire laws and building codes and protection measures. This information is available from but no limited to: 1) Shoshone District BLM office, 2) Fire District office , 3) county offices and, Fire Districts adjoining Fremont County. Consider having a professional inspect your property and offer recommendations for reducing the wildfire risk. Determine your Fire District's ability to respond to a wildfire. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are ingress and egress roads to your property clearly marked? • Are the roads wide enough to allow passage by firefighting equipment? • Can the Fire District find your house (house no., grid location)?
What should I do if a wildfire threatens my neighborhood?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the fire department or district fire warden immediately • Close all windows, doors and other openings to the outside to prevent sparks from blowing inside • Locate family members and pets • Wear non-flammable cotton or wool clothing • If you have time, wet down the roof and the area adjacent to the house
Do you have an evaluation plan for your family?
Plan several alternate routes for family members in the event wildland or a structural fire. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish where young family members will immediately go in the event of a fire and in the absence of adult supervision. • Establish "staging areas" for family members and/or community/subdivision members in the event normal evaluation routes become blocked, especially if the ingress and egress road is limited, that is, one road in, one road out • Prepare your vehicle for evacuation.
Should I create 'survivable space' around my home?
Create a 30-foot safety zone around the house. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep volume of vegetation in this zone to a minimum. If you live on a hill, extend this zone on the downhill side. The steeper the slope, the more open space you will need to protect your home. • Remove vines from the walls of the house • Move shrubs and other landscaping away from the sides of the house • Prune branches and shrubs within 15 feet of chimneys and stove pipes • Remove tree limbs within 15 feet of the ground • Thin a 15-foot space between tree crowns • Replace highly flammable vegetation (e.g., juniper, sagebrush, pine) with lower growing, less flammable species • Replace vegetation that has living or dead branches from the ground-level up (these act as ladder fuels for the approaching fire). • Keep lawns mowed frequently • Clear all areas of leaves, brush, dead limbs and fallen trees. Create a second zone at least 100 feet around the house. This zone should begin about 30 feet from the house and extend to at least 100 feet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce or replace as much of the most flammable vegetation as possible. If you live on a hill, you may need to extend the zone for several hundred feet to provide the desired level of safety.
When selecting landscaping materials, how do I make the right choices?
Choose plants that are acclimated to your area of the country. Avoid resinous varieties and look for those with a high amount of moisture in their leaves. Note that deciduous trees are generally less flammable than coniferous ones. Check with your State Foresters office, or with your extension agent because some areas of the country have regional plant lists available. A healthy, well-maintained landscape is very important, so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space plants carefully • Prune them regularly • Remove dead leaves and other litter from around trees, shrubs and vines • Provide the landscape with sufficient moisture.
Are combustible materials away from the house?
Stack firewood 100 feet away and uphill from the house. Keep gas grills and propane tanks at least 15 feet from the house.
Are porches enclosed underneath?
Any porch, balcony or overhang with exposed space underneath is fuel for an approaching fire. Overhangs ignite easily by flying embers and by the heat and fire that gets trapped underneath. If vegetation is allowed to grow underneath or if the space is used for storage, the hazard is increased significantly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear all flammable materials away from underneath sun decks and porches. • Extend ½-inch mesh screen from all overhangs down to the ground. • Enclose wooden stilts with non-combustible material such as concrete, brick, rock, stucco or metal. • Use non-combustible or fire-resistant materials for new porch or sun deck construction. If possible, build the structure to the ground so that there is no space underneath.
Are eaves and overhangs enclosed?

Are house vents covered with wire mesh?
Is the roof constructed of non-flammable materials?
The roof is especially vulnerable in a wildfire because firebrands and flaming debris can travel great distances, land on your roof, and start a new fire. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid flammable roofing materials such as wood, shake and shingle. • Use fire resistant materials such as single-ply membranes, fiberglass shingles, slate, metal, and clay and concrete tile. • Keep gutters clean of debris.
My wood-shake roof was treated with fire retardant some years ago. How can I tell if retardant needs to be reapplied?
Chop a small piece of wood from the edge of one of the shakes and hold a lighted match under it. If the shake ignites, roof retardant needs to be reapplied.
Are chimneys and stovepipes covered with spark arrestors?
Install spark arrestors on all chimneys, stovepipes and vents for fuel-burning heaters. Check with the Fire District for spark arrestor specifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use non-combustible or fire-resistant materials for new chimney construction and follow chimney-building specifications.
Is the house siding fire resistant?
Use fire-resistant materials in the siding of your home, such as stucco, metal, brick, cement shingles, concrete and rock. Existing wood siding can be treated with UL-approved fire retardant chemicals (not a permanent fix).
Have windows been treated to reduce the risk?
Windows allow radiant heat to pass through and ignite combustible materials inside. Dual-or triple-pane thermal glass, and fire resistant shutters or drapes, help reduce the wildfire risk. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close shutters or drapes while away from home to prevent the ignition of combustible materials and to keep home warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.

Web Sites for Homeowners

FIREWISE programs - <http://www.firewise.org/>

Red Zone Software - <http://www.redzonesoftware.com/index2.html>

FireWars/NOVA - http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/teachers/programs/2908_fire.html

Taking a Stand: Pros and Cons of Forest Fires -
<http://www.thirteen.org/wnetschool/origlessons/fire/index.html>

FEMA for Kids - <http://www.fema.gov/kids/wldfire.htm>

Living with Fire - http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/fire_game/

Pikes Peak Wildfire Prevention Partners - <http://www.ppwpp.org/>

Smokey Bear - <http://www.smokeybear.com/>

Sparky's Home Page - <http://www.sparky.org/>

Woods on Fire - National Institute for Science Education and the National Science Foundation - http://whyfiles.news.wisc.edu/018forest_fire/index.html